

The Human Touch

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And More!

Director's Message



Lisa-Michele Church,
Executive Director

At the Department of Human Services we receive great support from Governor Huntsman, Lt. Governor Herbert, and their offices. Since the Governor was elected 1-1/2 years ago, he has spent quite a bit of time visiting DHS programs, meeting with our staff and touring our offices.

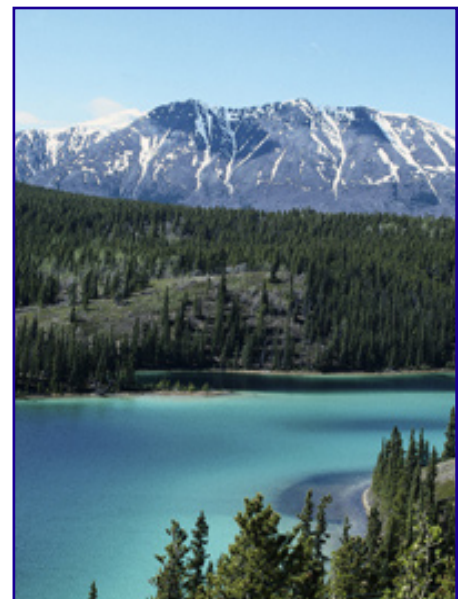
Last summer I had the chance to show Governor Huntsman our excellent programs at the Utah State Hospital. He complimented our staff and leadership for their innovation in mental health treatment. Another day he toured the Utah State Developmental Center and gave glowing reviews of our staff there. He asked to see our JJS secure care facility at Decker Lake and his tour there gave him an in-depth understanding of the issues faced by youth. At all of those locations he was impressed with staff's commitment and dedication. The Governor has been to our DHS Administration building several times to meet with key management staff, and he came again when we recognized the heroic efforts of our staff on Hurricane Katrina issues.

Last month, Governor Huntsman and Lt. Governor Herbert and their wives attended the Centenarian's Day sponsored by the Division of Aging

and Adult Services. They all praised the work done by the Division to organize that uplifting event.

Governor Huntsman attended the Certified Public Manager (CPM) presentation where Richard Anderson (DCFS) was named State Manager of the Year, and he spoke very highly of Richard's work in leading the Division of Child and Family Services. Lt. Governor Herbert personally presented Richard with the award a few weeks ago. The Governor also spent a morning touring Wasatch Mental Health in Provo to learn more about community mental health programs.

Brent Kelsey, (Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health) and I were able to take the Governor on a tour of the House of Hope drug treatment facility in Salt Lake just last week. He was so moved by the important work of the staff there that help the women working toward recovery. Despite his busy schedule and competing priorities, I appreciate the attention he pays to our issues. He has mentioned many times to me how much he admires the employees of the Department of Human Services and I am proud of all of you! Keep it up.





Veggies vs. Vending

Lisa Schauerhamer, JJS

It's 3:13 PM – those vending machines down the hall are calling your name. You know what I mean. Come on, I know you do! We have busy and stressful jobs in DHS. Does it feel like one more thing on the "To Do List" to plan ahead to eat healthy?

We all want to do better, be healthier and stronger, but it isn't always easy. Maybe today is the day we can try not to bite off more than we can chew (pun intended!). How about making one or two healthier choices for our bodies?

Here are a few reminders:

Fill up on veggies and fruits first. Add dark greens, enjoy a banana or apple for a snack. Check portion sizes. Why eat a whole sandwich, when half will satisfy your hunger? Look for whole grain options—they are an excellent source of fiber and B vitamins.

Taken from Sarah @ www.healthyutah.org Nutrition & Weight Management Monthly Article.

The best advice is to avoid the vending machine; however, if we are in a hunger-crunch we should at least make a healthier choice such as:

- Bottled Water
- Fresh, canned or dried fruit
- Packaged nuts or sunflower seeds
- Breakfast bars/cereal mixes
- Pretzels or baked chips or crackers
- 100% Vitamin C fruit snacks



Crayons For Kids

Catherine Taylor, ORS

ORS Gathers School Supplies for Richfield Kids



Richfield, Utah

Many Utah children will be heading back to school in a few weeks. Moms and dads will need to pay school fees, buy school clothes and supplies. Tammy Weis, Office of Recovery Services Associate Regional Director, Richfield office, knows that custodial parents count on the child support check to arrive so they can take care of these school needs—along with other daily needs.

Sometimes parents can't make the money stretch for notebooks, pencils, markers, scissors, construction paper, glue and other items kids need to start a fresh school year. "Being a mother to six children, school supplies are my specialty," said Tammy.

ORS staff know better than most the financial challenges families face this time of year. So, they made a plan and got busy. Tammy stepped up to coordinate the drive to gather up pencils, crayons, backpacks and other supplies for Richfield's children.

The next six weeks Richfield ORS staff are contributing school supplies and depositing them in the yellow school bus made by Tammy's teen-age twins Angela and Bruce. Later, staff will take the 'busload' of supplies to children in Richfield. "Community is worth building and we want to give back," says Tammy Weis.



The Human Touch

Stories of Hope

OGDEN - Child welfare work is filled with disappointments, tragedy and grief. Yet – it is the stories of hope we hear now and then – or experience – that make us smile, that help us believe that what we do makes a difference, that bring us back to work each day.

It is the caseworker that sees something promising in a child everyone else has abandoned. It is the parent who refuses to give up and surprises everyone by succeeding. It is the child who has known primarily hunger and neglect that finds a way to attach to someone who cares and grows into a responsible adult.

Hope – the lifeblood of child welfare – is all around us but hard to recognize or grasp some days.

The Quality Improvement Committee of DCFS's Northern Region found a way to recognize these stories of hope. The committee put out a request for "Stories of Hope" and amazing stories were shared.

The following story is excerpts from Brooke Nelson's June 17 article in the Standard Examiner spotlighting three exceptional DCFS workers.

DCFS Honors Three For Exceptional Service

Brooke Nelson, Standard-Examiner

A 20-year-old former foster child with nowhere to go for the holidays got a new start and even a Christmas tree. A man saved a young girl's life by refusing to sign a "do not resuscitate" order, even though her own parents had given up on her.

According to Assistant Attorney General Janice Ventura, caseworker Curtis Giles "firmly refused to sign any paperwork until all the facts were known." Working closely with legal counsel, Giles fought for the little girl's life.

"I couldn't dismiss the dignity of her little life even when she was so fragile," Giles said. "Our job is to restore dignity and self-respect to families as well as children."

Julie Trujillo and Tami Rivera, senior assistant caseworkers worked with a young man who came to DCFS with no other place to go for help.

"He just had the clothes on his back. He couldn't even go to the laundry and wash them," Trujillo said. "Anybody would've done it. It was just heartbreaking."

"The young man had recently been beaten and robbed of his few possessions. He remembered DCFS as a place to go for help from his days in foster care," Trujillo said.

The two employees helped him find housing, work, a bike for transportation and even gave him a small Christmas tree.

Brenda Durtschi, chairwoman Quality Improvement Committee, said it's important for employees to share their successes with each other.

"The more positive the outlook, the more positive the outcome," she said. "Keep sharing those things with your colleagues, because it's what keeps us going in this difficult line of work."

Durtschi said she hopes the recognition of success stories by the committee will become a quarterly tradition.

"It exemplifies your incredible commitment to someone in your community," she told DCFS employees.



Curtis Giles, caseworker

Juvenile Justice Youth Art Contest

Lisa Schauerhamer, JJS

The statewide JJS art contest began in April with the theme "This has meaning in my life because...."

This is the second in a series of DHS client art contests. Last year's contest for Seniors was a great success! The award winning art remains on display in the DHS Administration building.

Youth are working on art entries with a boost of motivation and instruction from John Ortiz, JJS Auditor and founder of Tap the Talent project. "I hope by increasing their skills, the youths' overall artistic talent will be sparked and ignite," said Ortiz. He believes the contest provides an opportunity for the appreciation of art and design.

The youth participating in the contest say it's beneficial for them because before they were drawing just to draw. "Now, they draw because it's fun, and that they feel that the cartoonist drawings of themselves have given them some sense of humor and better understanding of art," said Sosie Bouchard of Mill Creek Youth Center.



John Ortiz uses the art of comics to captivate the attention of youth and kick off the JJS art contest.

Each JJS facility will select a winning entry and send it to the DHS Administration Building for final judging in September 2006.

To find out more about the Tap the Talent program go to www.tapthetalent.com

Recognition Awards

Donna Russell, EDO

Nominations now open

Announcing, three prestigious Executive Director's awards for Department of Human Services employees. The award recipients will be recognized at the DHS Awards Luncheon September 26, 2006 in Salt Lake City. All nomination materials must be submitted by July 31, 5:00 PM. No exceptions will be made to this deadline.

Nominations are open for:

- The Executive Director's Award
- The Career Achievement Award
- The Supervisor of the Year Award

Full information and nomination criteria are available on-line:

http://www.dhs.utah.gov/pdf/dhs_recognition_awards_2006.pdf

Questions may be directed to Donna L. Russell, 801/538-4608 or DLRussell@utah.gov





Utah's Centenarians



Rhea Barnett , 108, visits with Gov. Huntsman

Each year a wonderful luncheon celebrates Utah's centenarians. The Governor speaks to the whole assembly, then visits with each of the Centenarians one-on-one, at which time they get their pictures taken together.

Many of the Centenarians look forward to this annual event. It's amazing to meet and talk with these special people. Allan Jackson (age 102) had been driving himself to the events, but this year he decided to let someone else drive. He said, "Always look for the best in everything, and always believe in yourself."

A common theme that comes out in interviews with Centenarians is, "Keep a positive outlook."

It's amazing to see how young and spry many of them are. Utah's oldest man, Dr. Russell B. Clark, age 105 never came to the celebrations until last year. He was always too busy. At the age of 102, he was given Prime Time's national award as America's oldest worker. He still runs his own real estate business. He was persuaded to attend the celebration last year by being invited to be a guest speaker. He loves to give speeches on history and on living a good, healthy life. He couldn't make it this year because he was handling business in California.

The oldest Utahan on record passed away a few years ago, at the age of 116 1/2. He was a Navajo, living on the reservation in San Juan County. Only a couple of years before he passed away, his family had to make him stop riding his horse. He didn't have a television or telephone. When asked why he didn't, he said, "Don't need 'em."

Lee Ann Whitaker, DAAS

At a celebration a few years ago, two Centenarians discovered they were schoolmates, and hadn't seen each other since graduation.

For a couple of years, we had two Centenarians who were sisters, and who attended the celebration every year. The young one passed away a couple of years ago. The big sister, Mrs. Ivy Brooks, is now Utah's second oldest person, and attended this year's celebration at the age of 106.

Utah's oldest citizen, Mrs. Rhea Barnett has the distinction of living in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries!

Two years ago, one of our centenarians asked if she could play the piano at the celebration. We said yes, and at the end of the celebration, she sat down and played some really snappy, rousing ragtime tunes. She was amazing!

What people may not realize is for the past twenty years the dedicated staff of our Division of Aging and Adult Services staff has coordinated this special event. Their extensive planning and preparations produce a memorable event year after year.

Utah's three oldest people were present:

- Mrs. Rhea Barnett, Age 108
- Mrs. Ivy Brooks, Age 106
- Mrs. Irene Leishman, Age 106



Ivy Brooks, 106, with the Huntsmans

Self Advocacy: Empowering Political Change

Claire Mantonya, Utah Developmental Disabilities Council

Every two years adults with developmental disabilities meet at the national Self-Advocates Becoming Empowered (SABE) conference. This year, 19 Utahans with disabilities went to Atlanta and enthusiastically participated.

Ten of the 19 participants made the journey from Montezuma Creek – for seven of them, this was their first trip on a plane! Others came from Layton, Salt Lake, Roosevelt, and St. George. The delegation from the Navajo Reservation was supported in part by the Utah Developmental Disabilities Council (UDDC) and the Navajo Nation.

Hope Finley and Eric Matthes, self-advocates from Salt Lake, were conference presenters. Their efforts, passion, knowledge and personal experiences drew a crowd of over 50 attendees to their session. They enthusiastically shared experiences and lessons learned about being involved in the political process and promoting a greater level of respect for people with disabilities.

Both Hope and Eric have spent countless hours advocating in the political arena for positive change. They actively supported H.J.R. 14 – the resolution urging state agencies to update references to “mental retardation” to a more respectful description, which passed in the 2006 General Session of the Utah Legislature.

Another Utahans at the conference was Bryon Murray of Roosevelt. He waged a successful campaign as, “a big mouth advocate” and was elected as the SABE Region 3 (Utah, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado) Representative. He will now serve for four years on the National board.



Bryon Murray, Advocate

The self-advocacy movement in Utah is known as People First. More than 20 groups meet across Utah to provide adult education, enhance awareness and allow members the opportunity to take on leadership roles locally, statewide and nationally. The UDDC and Division of Services for People with Disabilities (DSPD) are also involved with People First.

Many people with disabilities are recognizing that their voice matters. They are becoming influential in their communities to impact positive changes for people with disabilities and their families.

For further information contact: Claire Mantonya, Utah Developmental Disabilities Council, cmantonya@utah.gov 801-533-3965 or visit www.sabeusa.org.

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